

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 245 631

HE 017 356

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TITLE The Philosophy of Higher Education. Revised. ASHE
1984 Annual Meeting Paper.
PUB DATE Mar 84
NOTE 21p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the
Association for the Study of Higher Education
(Chicago, IL, March 12-14, 1984).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Information
Analyses (070)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational History; *Educational Philosophy;
*Higher Education; Literature Reviews; Postsecondary
Education as a Field of Study; *Scholarship
IDENTIFIERS *ASHE Annual Meeting

ABSTRACT

The history of the philosophy of higher education was studied. Examining descriptions of the field of higher education was one approach, along with computer searches. There appeared to be a gap in the study of higher education--the failure to study the history of philosophy of higher education. The problem seemed to be that scholars had not tried to build on their historical insights to develop a philosophical history to parallel their institutional and social histories. Examples of writings that have provided a history of some philosophical influences are cited. It was felt that a broader and deeper study of the philosophical writing in the history of higher education might help clarify current issues. In addition, an example of analytic philosophy, one of the newest ways of approaching philosophical problems, is included. A number of quotations from works are included. (SW)

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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HE 017 356



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This paper was presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education held at the Conrad Hilton Hotel in Chicago, Illinois, March 12-14, 1984. This paper was reviewed by ASHE and was judged to be of high quality and of interest to others concerned with the research of higher education. It has therefore been selected to be included in the ERIC collection of ASHE conference papers.

Annual Meeting—March 12-14, 1984—Conrad Hilton
Chicago, Illinois

Introduction

The Meanings of "Philosophy of Higher Education"

The phrase, "philosophy of higher education," as our analytic philosopher friends would tell us, has a crucial ambiguity in it. It could refer to (among other meanings): (1) the study of the philosophy of higher education; (2) thought about higher education that uses philosophical methodology although not necessarily written as "philosophy" or by a philosopher; (3) conscious attempts to do philosophy of higher education. Each of these three meanings could have past and present examples, providing a large variety of different topics to write about here. It is obvious that I am not going to talk about all of any of the possible categories above. It should also be obvious that I am not a philosopher because no philosopher would propose such a broad topic. Since I am not a philosopher that means what you are about to read will not be philosophy, but a commentary on philosophy by an historian. While discussing what I'm not I should also mention that until recently I have not been academically concerned with higher education topics. Thus one reason for this presentation is to find out what those who have a longer acquaintance with the field think about the topic and these ideas.

Why the "Philosophy of Higher Education"

Perhaps my subject will begin to take focus if I briefly describe how I became interested in the idea of "the philosophy of higher education." It began about five years ago as the result of a multi-year assignment on a college level committee charged with designing a five or six-year teacher education program to run parallel with our current four-year program.

I kept wondering "why" we were doing what we were doing as we "designed" our new program. I eventually realized that what I wanted, and needed, was "a philosophy of teacher education." The only one available seemed to be B.O. Smith's, A Design for a School of Pedagogy, which I didn't like.

I wanted to find something written on John Dewey's philosophy of teacher education. As a good Deweyan I was trying to design a teacher education program that would produce teachers in the progressive tradition. I was completely surprised when I was unable to find anything written about Dewey's philosophy of teacher education -- what I now see as a subset of the philosophy of higher education. For the last couple of years I have been doing research to try and fill the void on Dewey's philosophy of teacher education with the help of an Illinois State colleague, Rod Riegle, who began to claim analytic philosophy of higher education as his field about five years ago. He seemed like a logical ally, and he also seemed to be about the only person I could find who was active in philosophy and claimed to be a philosopher of higher education. The more I talked to Rod about his work the more interested I became in investigating the history of the philosophy of higher education.

Looking for the Philosophy of Higher Education

The Study of the History of Philosophy of Higher Education

I asked several questions in my attempt to pursue works that would analyze the history of the philosophy of higher education. For example, What are they teaching in all those Philosophy of Higher Education courses and how many are "they"? For starters, there are probably not any philosophy of higher education courses -- although I think there may be Philosophy of the Junior College courses lurking somewhere. There are, however, Historical and

Philosophical Foundations of Higher Education courses. And if the one published syllabus I found, Schuster and Thelin's "Historical and Philosophical Foundations of American Higher Education" at the Claremont Graduate School is truly a model, they are reading a lot of history and not much philosophy; doing some history and not doing much philosophy. (R. Freeman Butts once told me he solved the problem by calling his Teachers College course "History and Theory of Higher Education.")

From an ERIC Higher Ed. Clearinghouse survey, it appears about 20% of those who can be thought of as "Full Time Faculty in Higher Education" have a "research and interest in Foundations/History/Philosophy;" about 5% indicated an exclusive interest in those areas. (n=450) Reid and Goetz found an apparently stronger interest in history and philosophy in a survey reported at ASHE in 1982. How many are interested in just Philosophy is impossible to tell, but the numbers suggested the possibility of a body of literature to pursue. Partial SSCI and ERIC searches did not indicate much correlation between either the 20% group or the 5% group on publications that could be characterized as philosophical. Although the search did find some legitimate examples of the philosophy of higher education, it did not identify much in the way of the history of philosophy of higher education. And the problem of what is and what isn't philosophical became immediately obvious, for example, the following opens a description of one ERIC entry, "In this philosophical essay about the role of a private college ..." The article described was William F. Buckley's, "Giving Yale to Connecticut."

I tried another tack to answer my question, looking at descriptions of the field of higher education. I first came across Dressel and Mayhew's, Higher Education as a Field of Study which Reid and Goetz describe as "the

most important of the works on the field of higher education." Reality set in. In discussing "the disciplines" Dressel and Mayhew say, "Philosophy has contributed virtually nothing to the understanding of higher education; indeed, only one or two philosophers have actively cultivated the field." I had no way of knowing whether their harsh assessment was true, or is still true, since the book is a decade old. However, I was quickly becoming more willing to accept it, especially after realizing that Henry David Aiken, who the authors describe as a scholar "who redirected his whole professional interest as a philosopher to examining higher education using philosophic tools of inquiry, became interested and involved and made major time commitments to studying higher education..." didn't even show up in their "Bibliography." A look at the Association of Professors of Higher Education monograph, Higher Education: A Developing Field of Study, did nothing to dispel my growing doubt about the "extantness" of a history of the philosophy of higher education. Neither did Riegel and Bender's 1972 list of the "top 25 books recommended as basic reading by faculty members teaching courses in the field of higher education."

Still not totally convinced by what was, to me, growing evidence of a huge gap in the study of higher education -- the failure to study the history of philosophy of higher education, I tried one more source, encyclopedia articles on the subject. I was optimistic when I open the multi-volumed International Encyclopedia of Higher Education to "Philosophies of Higher Education, Historical and Contemporary." I wasn't after I read it. The entry is little more than a "paragraph per person" exegesis from Plato to Hutchins. It is neither philosophical nor historical. It was chronological, however, so those interested in the correct historical order of Comenius,

Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Froebel, all of whom had almost nothing to say about higher education, read the International Encyclopedia of Higher Education.

I tried one more source. The "state of the art" Encyclopedia of Educational Research was my last hope. I read David Madsen's

"History and Philosophy of Higher Education" and found what I found before.

I was sad for philosophy, but I must admit to a certain happiness for the esteem, if not practicality, which history was accorded by the authors I read in this part of my research. Books by Rudolph, Veysey and Hofstadter were constantly seen as important, topping the list by Reid and Goetz and holding three of the top 10 places in Riegel and Bender's survey. They are not "philosophical" histories but they do not ignore philosophy. In The Emergence of the American University, discussing the growing influence of German universities during the late nineteenth century, Veysey says, "In one way or another, Germany could appeal to every sort of academic American. Thus the classical training of the gymnasium could inspire enthusiasm in the defender of the old-time college. German philosophical idealism fulfilled a more important function for many American advocates of liberal culture; the older Germany of Kant, Hegel, and Goethe provided strong grist for the less Anglophilic humanists." Hofstadter, in an essay entitled "The Age of the College," comments on the epistemology of the pre-Civil War curriculum, "Knowledge was thought of as a certain more or less fixed quantum of truth, and the primary function of education was to get as much as possible of this corpus of Christian truth into the heads of the undergraduates.... The concept of knowledge as a progressive field of inquiry and acquisition, associated with scientific research, was of course inconsistent with this ideal." The problem is not that the good historians

of American higher education are ignorant of philosophy. The problem is that no one has tried to build on their historical insights to develop a philosophical history to parallel their institutional and social histories.

So, it appears there is very little study of the history of philosophy of higher education. That does not mean there has been no history of the philosophy of higher education. I continued my search with a different focus.

The History of Philosophy of Higher Education

What we need are many more works like The Scottish Enlightenment and the American College Ideal by Douglas Sloan. Sloan shows "that to complete the picture Scotland must take its place with England and Germany as a major influence on the development of American higher education." In doing so he provides a history of some philosophical influences on higher education. Sloan's method is a combination of biography, institutional history and the history of ideas. An example speaks best for itself, so I quote from parts of his final chapter:

The socially and intellectually conservative uses to which Scottish common sense realism seems to have been put in the nineteenth century have encouraged similar interpretations of the introduction of the philosophy in the eighteenth century.... It is only part of the truth, however, and its anachronistic simplification produces unfortunate results, particularly for the historian of education. In the first place, the role played by Scottish realism in the early Princeton tradition seems to defy the neat application of the conservative-liberal categories.... Another, still more important problem is involved in appraising Scottish influences upon education in the eighteenth century, as distinct from the nineteenth century. In the latter period, it was apparently Scottish realism itself... that was of prime importance to Americans. Philosophical realism in the earlier period, however, was only one among several Scottish offerings that Americans found attractive.... Scottish social thought was at least as important to eighteenth century Americans as Scottish epistemology.

In the body of his book, Sloan exemplifies these conclusions and provides a good example of what a detailed study of part of the history of the philosophy of higher education might look like.

A second example, Michael Katz's "From Theory to Survey in Graduate Schools of Education," is an excellent case of the practicality and importance of the history of philosophy of higher education. In many institutions the question of distinguishing between the Ed.D. and Ph.D. are still with us. Katz provides some historical insight into philosophical (and other) shifts that generated some of the current controversy.

The conceptual shift that characterized education as a university subject also marked the development of the social sciences. From philosophy the social sciences inherited a formalistic, rationalistic tendency to create universally explanatory, all-embracing theories. However, both sociology and psychology, for example, drew from other intellectual sources as well. The need for concrete data led them to history and the natural sciences. History was particularly important for early sociologists, whereas psychologists turned to evolutionary theory and physiology. Education, too, drew its data from the past, and in early university courses the history of education was as prominent as its theory.

In the attention of social scientists, the sources which supplied concrete data superseded the a priori formulation of theory, and a growing empiricism characterized American thought. American psychology, unlike German, became functional and practical. Under the influence of a pragmatic outlook, psychologists became concerned with mind as an instrument for affecting environment, and their frame of reference for the formation of theory became concrete events and their consequences. Sociological study, likewise, turned away from the consideration of entire societies and the formation of all-encompassing theories to the study of small units by an empirical approach which stressed the gathering of data through statistics. Philosophy itself, as construed by the pragmatists, acquired an increasingly empirical orientation. Thus, in its increasing concern with the concrete and the measurable, education was again part of a larger important development in American thought. The divorce of education and philosophy was accompanied by the crumbling of the essentially rationalistic Herbartianism. A crucial observation is that in this period the leaders of the onslaught within education were men like John Dewey and

Edward Thorndike, who were also making key contributions to the social and behavioral sciences.

I have used these somewhat extensive quotations, and those that follow, both because they are good examples and because I assume the reader is not familiar with the subject matter I am trying to illuminate. I hope their length helps to provide a more accurate understanding of the kind of research for which I am pointing out a need.

The Philosophy of Higher Education in History

Many academics have been exposed to examples of historic documents from the philosophy of higher education, i.e., the Yale Report of 1828 or Newman's Idea of a University as part of a "foundations" course in higher education. However, I wonder how many have been introduced to the work of the philosopher F.W.J. Schelling's (a collaborator with Hegel). I quote from On University Studies (1840), "Ready-made knowledge can only be memorized; knowledge is not truly our own until we are capable of reproducing the given content in a form of our own making. Memorizing is but a negative condition; true intrussusception or organic assimilation is impossible without inner transformation of what we learn. All rules for study are summed up in this one: learn only in order to create. Only by his divine capacity for production is man truly man; without it, no more than a tolerably well-devised machine." This "historic" epistemology might easily lead to another question -- is there a link between Schelling's view of man and the pedagogy of higher education? Perhaps there is a connection to the Oxbridge Model described this way in Stephen David Ross's recent epistemological look at higher education, Learning and Discovery: The University and the Development of the Mind, "An interesting contrast may be made here, with the English honors system at Oxford and Cambridge. There, unlike the American college

system, courses are of minor importance. The three-year program consists of lectures and weekly tutorials, leading to a massive examination.... the English system emphasizes mental activity rather than repetition." (Ross argues against both the Oxbridge and U.S. models based on his analysis of "insight.") Again, these basic philosophical inquiries seem immediately practical when connected to current debates. In other words, a broader and deeper study of the philosophical writing in the history of higher education should (might) help clarify current issues.

The Study of the Philosophy of Higher Education

In addition to these specialized historical studies of the history of the philosophy of higher education mentioned above, there are also other studies of earlier examples of the philosophy of higher education. J.M. Cameron's On the Idea of a University, for example, uses Newman's The Idea of a University Defined and Illustrated as a jumping off point. In my opening paragraph, Cameron's book falls into two meanings of the phrase "philosophy of higher education." It involves both the study of the philosophy of higher education and an attempt to do philosophy of higher education by a philosopher. Cameron moves from the "past" of Newman to the "present." It is the "presentness" of his work that is interesting philosophically. For example, this passage occurs in his chapter, "The Crisis of the University."

I believe more undergraduates (and, indeed, graduate students as well) than one might imagine have in their minds some such conception of the university as underlies Newman's critical remarks. They know there is a huge distinction between teaching and instruction; they are dissatisfied with the great 'cop-out' they may have come across in their schooldays: that on the foundation of little reading, little information, little practice in argument (I mean, as distinct from assertion and counter-assertion), they have a duty to form opinions on a great

variety of subjects, a duty to, as they say, 'make up their own minds for themselves.' They hope to find in the university and through the great men they believe to be its gods moments of epiphany, deeper knowledge, more complex emotion, the unriddling of riddles, maps to many countries of the mind, spells to drive away dragons. I believe that even under the worst conditions, even in the most frozen, petrified, cast-iron institutions, some young men and women do find all these things, despite the circumstances that conspire against them. But many miss them who might have found them, had our internal arrangements been different. I am therefore committed to saying something about some of the things that are wrong and reformable in our teaching and examining arrangements and in the general way in which we conduct our lives as teachers and students in colleges and universities.

I say the "presentness" of the book is interesting because of one reviewer's comment. (Admittedly I am picking on one small section of an eight-page essay review to make a point.) Paul Vogt says, "The book is well written and quite witty. The lectures out of which it grew must have been a pleasure to hear. Many readers will undoubtedly find the work easily worth the two or three hours it takes to complete. But it has all been said before, and more convincingly. Only the examples have been changed. Thus, the book is probably best thought of as a sign of a spreading dissatisfaction with the way universities usually conduct undergraduate education." My question is this. Even if it has been said before, isn't there some legitimacy, even necessity, to doing philosophy by using "old" philosophy with new examples? It is a question about the methodology of "the philosophy of higher education." The problem is, of course, if there is no field, there is no methodology.

Finding the Philosophy of Higher Education

Philosophy of Higher Education

By now it should be obvious that I have found the "philosophy of higher education," in the Ross and Cameron works cited above, at least in the second and third meanings of my opening paragraph. I would be remiss at this point

if I didn't also mention another reviewer of Cameron's book, Howard Adelman. He uses his own work, The Holiversity in his discussion of Cameron's work. I would classify The Holiversity as a philosophy of higher education book for several reasons, one of which is its use of analogy and analysis of analogies. Here is the origin of the term "holiversity."

The term 'holiversity' has two opposite connotations. It suggests a whole, a totality. It also connotes a hole or that which is empty. It is the thesis of this book that the Draft Report is in favour of a holiversity which is emptied of the historically essential character of the university: its role as a developer of personal character in the Sanctuary of Truth and its role as a professional training ground in the Sanctuary of Method. If the holiversity, the modern Culture-Mart, is developed as a pure type to encompass the Social Service Station but to exclude the Sanctuary of Method and the Sanctuary of Truth, then we will have a university in which the core has been removed. On the other hand, if the Holiversity (with a capital 'H') can be developed not only to include the Sanctuary of Method but to re-incorporate and recreate colleges within its confines dedicated to the development of self-knowledge and personal character, then a total university will have been created. A Holiversity embraces all the models of the university, whereas a holiversity is one of the models, the modern Culture-Mart.

The more I looked through the words of Cameron and Adelman and other books like John F.A. Taylor's The Public Commission of the University, or John Chapman's The Western University on Trial, or Harold Taylor's, Students Without Teachers, or Henry David Aiken's, Predicament of the University, all books written by philosophers or philosophically, the more I was reminded of Dewey's statement "philosophic thinking has for its differentia the fact that the uncertainties with which it deals are found in widespread social conditions and aims, consisting in a conflict of organized interests and institutional claims." Perhaps this idea is best exemplified by Robert Paul Wolff's The Ideal of the University (can there be a classic in a non-field). Here again is the notion of useful philosophy.

The portions of my education which proved most useful to me in my attempts at social criticism have been precisely those which originally seemed least relevant to politics or society. The mathematical logic to which I devoted so much time served as the basis for my study of game theory, which in turn enabled me to criticize the technical arguments as well as the moral presuppositions of the defense intellectuals. Without that background, I, like so many other peaceniks, would have been reduced to complaining that Herman Kahn and Thomas Schelling are nasty men, which as it happens is both false and irrelevant to the merits of their positions. My extremely abstract and specialized work on the philosophy of Kant has been the source of my analysis of the foundations of the authority of the state. It is only a short and easy step to a quite "relevant" critique of the notion of civil disobedience and the obligation to serve in the armed forces. The essays I published recently on the nature of liberty, loyalty, political power, tolerance, and community trace their origins to technical studies in theory of knowledge and metaphysics.

These works all grew out of an especially stressful period in higher education during which certain fundamental assumptions have necessarily been re-examined. Even metaphysics finds its place, as James Drane points out in his 1972, "A Philosophy of Man and Higher Education," "Disruptions on today's campus stem in part from student resistance to institutional patterns formed according to old notions of humanness which contradict their new image of man.... Continuing to operate educational institutions on the basis of beliefs about man no longer accepted sets up a destructive dialectic between institution and student.... What philosophy of man are we assuming in our organization and administration?"

Of course there are also more recent statements that are "philosophical" and about higher education and not related to such grand themes. Perhaps my favorite example of the philosophy of higher education is Dalhousie University philosopher William Hare's, Open-Mindedness and Education. Hare writes what I hope is safe to call analytic philosophy, sometimes of higher education. Here is one of his justifications for the book -- "unless we have a firm understanding

of the concept of open-mindedness, we will not be in a position to assess, for example, the claim that one of the major results of attending college or university is the development of open-mindedness in the student." These fascinating results of his research are indicative of the style of analytic philosophy:

The major arguments of this book so far can be summarized in the following six points:

1. Open-mindedness is logically unrelated to what one believes: neutrality and doubt are neither necessary nor sufficient for open-mindedness.

2. Open-mindedness is logically related to the concept of education and is consistent with other valuable attitudes.

3. Open-mindedness is an attitude we can have to settled as well as to ongoing issues. It involves being willing to revise one's views in the light of counter-evidence. No subject matter in itself clashes with open-mindedness.

4. No particular method of teaching in itself excludes or ensures open-minded teaching.

5. There is some evidence that discussion methods may be more effective in changing attitudes than more formal approaches, but the evidence relating to the claim that the neutral-chairman approach more effectively promotes open-mindedness than other approaches is inconclusive.

6. There is much evidence available indicating the many ways in which a teacher may unwittingly fall short of objectivity and impartiality, and anyone seriously pursuing open-mindedness cannot ignore this evidence.

This example of analytic philosophy, one of the newest ways of approaching philosophical problems brings me to the final section of the body of this paper, a discussion with the rather presumptuous focus "What Philosophy of Education Should Be."

Pre-finding the Philosophy of Higher Education

Brubacher and the Study of the Philosophy of Higher Education

Sooner or later I have to say something about John Brubacher's, On the Philosophy of Higher Education, the only philosophy of higher education book I know of. In general, it is a better start on the history of philosophy of higher education than it is on the philosophy of higher education. On

Brubacher I must agree with reviewer Richard Hagman, "John Brubacher's book is grievously mistitled. For all its discussion of problems that might be labeled 'philosophical,' for all its subtle suggestions of 'aims,' for all its attempts to comprehend and synthesize disparate views concerning widely differing aspects of higher education as higher learning and as a central social institution, the book is not 'on the philosophy of higher education.'"

Special Issues in the Philosophy of Higher Education

While the proposal for more work on the Brubacher model reflects the first meaning of philosophy of higher education in my opening paragraph, the next two examples from the present ought to demonstrate a "should be" in the philosophy of higher education based on the second and third uses. We need more examples of the May/June, 1982, "Special Issue" of the Journal of Higher Education on "Ethics and the Academic Profession" for exactly the reason editor David Dill suggests, "This special issue... is intended to initiate thought and discussion on issues of academic responsibility that we hope will widen and broaden in the decade ahead."

We also need more examples of books like the Philosophy and Future of Graduate Education edited by William K. Frankena. It provides insightful writing and commentary, a necessary condition for adequate philosophy of higher education. The following passages illustrate the type of dialogue required. From Passmore's paper:

To sum up, then, I have stood by the conception of graduate education as having as its special excellence training in research. But I have argued that research needs to be broadly interpreted and need not issue in a contribution to learning, in any serious sense of that phrase. I have refused to accept the view that graduate education is improperly so called, that it is really training in the sense that is synonymous with drill. I have gone in search of a graduate education which opens up rather than closes down the mind.

I must not be taken to be hostile to specialization. I see no good reason why specialization should not begin relatively early in a student's career, provided only that the subject in which he is specializing interprets its responsibilities widely. To know more and more about less and less is not necessarily worse than to know less and less about more and more. What I am opposed to, rather, is an undue insistence on professional standards when that is carried so far as to discourage students from trying their hand at anything they have not been professionally trained to do.

From Frankena's "Comments":

More generally, Passmore begins by presuming in a Platonic spirit, that the philosophy of graduate education is an attempt to discover the proper excellence of graduate education and ends by concluding that the special excellence of graduate education is training in research, or independent work, where "research" is broadly interpreted and "training" is taken in its best sense. This is persuasive but I have three questions....

Third, just how does a training in research help to prepare students for vocations other than teaching and research itself? Passmore complains that "relatively little attention has been paid to the relevance of a research-centered degree as a preparation for vocations in industry or government." But then he too proceeds to pay relatively little attention to it. I do not really doubt that training in research of the broader of his two kinds is relevant as a preparation for vocations in industry or government that do not themselves consist of teaching or research. But I should like to see this spelled out and supported.

From Passmore's "Reply":

Insofar as an American graduate school substantially undertakes the sort of work which is elsewhere undertaken at the honors undergraduate level, then it prepares in exactly the same way as such a degree does, and can constitute a liberal education precisely as that education does. It is only insofar as it is a research degree that special questions arise about its suitability. I believe that the experience of undertaking an inquiry in depth can offer a form of education which is highly suitable as a preparation for careers outside academic life or for rounding off a liberal education. The fact that it is specialized does not mean that it is educational only for specialists. There is no antithesis between doing specialized work and having a broad education if the specialized work is conducted in a way which brings out the connection between the specialized work and broader problems.

Finally, we need more attention paid to special questions in the philosophical higher education by those philosophers in the analytic tradition. For example, this conclusion to a paper by Gerald Reagan on "Academic Productivity and the Evaluation of the Professoriate" should lead to additional research on "qualifitative productivity."

It has been argued in this paper that the demand to increase productivity, when applied to universities, is or can be misleading. We can be misled because the notions of quantity and quality function differently within the university than outside the university. Outside the university, and in allocating resources to the university, quantity is likely to be treated as the primary criterion and quality as a secondary criterion, i.e., quantity is to be maintained or increased, and the quality should be as high as can be reasonably expected given the quantitative restrictions. Within the university, quality is more likely and more properly treated as the primary criterion with quantity as a secondary criterion, i.e., quality is to be maintained as increased, and given a satisfactory or higher level of quality, the quantity should be as high as can be reasonably expected.

It has been argued further that within the university there is a peculiar sort of productivity which ought to be honored and rewarded. This "productivity" is found when the intellectual community increases its intellectual power and competence. To fail to honor this sort of productivity is to encourage a university to squander its most basic resource and weaken its ability to produce the by-products of scholarship, i.e., and good teaching, intellectual service, and the artifacts of scholarship.

Needed: The Old and the New in the Philosophy of Higher Education

I have avoided mentioning the Liberal Arts as long as possible because I have a fear that most people think only about the Liberal Arts when the subject of the philosophy of higher education is brought up. There is no doubt that arguments have raged recently and long ago over the value of a liberal education, the nature of a liberal education, and the meaning of a liberal education. Many of these arguments have been philosophical in tone and substance. And some haven't -- in a "Think Piece on CBE and Liberal Education" the

author actually asks, What are the liberal competencies? (Mortimer Adler, where are you when we really need you?)

However, the more I read on the topic of the liberal arts, the more I find what looks to be a tangle of epistemology that has now become an ethical tangle as well. That is, what we should know must follow a consideration of what we can know and how we can know it. As Brubacher points out, "It is no great leap from (Newman's view) to the statement of that twentieth-century rationalist, Adler, that the aim of liberal education should be the same for all people everywhere and always." I am not sure we need another history of the liberal arts, but a history of the philosophical justifications for the liberal arts should help us make some decisions about their place in the modern curriculum and should be part of the future of the philosophy of higher education.

Conclusion

I have not offered a definition of the philosophy of higher education because I believe its meaning ought to be found in its use. I have tried to show many of its uses above -- but not enough to come to a definition. If I have successfully shown enough uses then you will conclude with me and with Brubacher's reviewer Richard Hagman:

Philosophy, today, is not so much a discipline requiring an academic department (although that can be readily justified) as a method of investigation, a criticism of criticism or metacriticism. In this respect, philosophy is done in many of the disciplines where there is conscious and systematic reflection on the critical statements that describe their nature and purposes. Brubacher's book might have done two things: it might have been a conscious and systematic consideration of higher education as higher learning and as a complex social phenomenon or it might have been a conscious and systematic reflection on the critical statements concerning higher education. As the former, it would have been a philosophy of higher education. As the latter, it would have done something much more valuable -- it would have established

the philosophy of higher education as a field of study. Because this is an important task and because the philosophy of higher education has been squeezed out of most graduate programs of higher education by what are ultimately secondary subjects -- administration and finance of higher education (who can proceed with either of these if there is no clear concept of the purposes of such activities?) -- the insight and wisdom of a Brubacher is needed.

Footnotes

1. There are no "footnotes," save this one, because I don't want to discuss the content of the selections cited. I want to focus on the concept "the philosophy of higher education." As my secretary Doris Ehrlich said, "This is the footnote to end all footnotes." I welcome additional examples of the philosophy of higher education.